

Annual Report

Aberdeen Care and Repair (Managed by Castlehill Housing Association) 01/04/2012 to 31/03/2013

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aberdeen Care and Repair work in partnership with public, private and third sector organisations to provide services that assist owner-occupiers and private rented tenants with repairs, improvements, adaptations and heating issues within the home. Although traditionally our services were aimed at owner- occupiers and private rented tenants many of our services, in particular our small repairs service, gardening, security and minor aids projects are also available to social housing tenants.

1.2 Our client group are older people, people with disabilities or long-term health problems living within Aberdeen city. The service's main objectives are to support older/or disabled people to remain living independently within their own home in a safe and secure environment.

1.3 Funding for the service comes from various sources including Aberdeen City Council (Housing and Environment), Fairer Scotland Fund, Change Fund, Common Good Fund (Homecheck) , income generation through our small repairs and adaptation services and donations from various charitable trusts and local companies.

1.4 Each year the number of requests and referrals increases and the need for the type of assistance care and repair provides becomes more demanding as client's needs are more complex. The project over the years has adapted and changed to meet the demands of both service users and funders. The removal of statutory grants for repair and improvements in 2008 has resulted in an increased need for Officers to identify alternative funding routes, one of which is accessing charitable funding for low - income households. Charitable funding, although effective, is very time consuming, which can result in work being delayed and the condition of property worsening. As a result an application for Fairer Scotland Funding was made to provide revenue funding for a Funding Assistant's post within the service to support officers, and clients by raising charitable funding for work required in their property. The application was successful and secured funding for this post during 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/12 and we have recently received confirmation of continued funding for 2013/14. Detailed information on the outcomes for the charitable funding is contained in this report.

1.5 The changes in the OT criteria in September 2010 impacted heavily on the service, with an increased number of clients contacting the service for advice and assistance with minor aids and adaptations. Although the service could assist with this type of work we did not have the capacity to meet this need. An application was submitted to the Change Fund to support a minor aids project, which was successful for 2011/12 and 2012/13. .

1.6 Since July 2008 an in-house small repairs service has been in operation, this has developed over the years to meet the increased demand for this type of assistance. We currently employ 6 tradesmen to assist older and disabled people within the city by carrying out small repairs or small tasks within their home at a fixed charge. The existence of this service has enabled us to:

- Enter into a service level agreement, to provide a joiner/safety officer for the Homecheck scheme
- Introduce a minor aids/adaptation service, which is funded through the Change Fund. This service provides early intervention measures such as installing grab rails internally and

externally, extending front door steps and fitting key safes thus preparing properties for the ageing occupants.

- Develop the service to offer some services to local Housing providers. Our tradesmen carry out non-responsive maintenance work for some providers, charging full recovery costs, which are reinvested into the service. From 1st April 2013 this service will operate through the trading arm of Castlehill Housing Association, Castlehill Solutions.
- Continue the development of the services for older and disabled to meet gaps in service provision as well as generating income through the social enterprise to reinvest in service provision.

1.7 This year we have worked with Aberdeen City Council and other housing providers on a few projects within the city:

- Victorian Tenement Project – targeting householders living in mixed tenure blocks of pre 1919 tenements where fuel poverty is known to be prevalent. Our joiners carry out draught-proofing work to front and rear entrance doors, extending or providing a loft hatch at competitive rates.
 - 38 tenements had work carried out in 2012/13
- Tenant Draught-proofing – Our joiners have been carrying out draught-proofing work on behalf of ACC for their tenants.
 - 24 tenants have had draught-proofing work carried out

By organisations joining together to deliver projects throughout the city the outcomes can be improved in many ways, namely

- Cost effectiveness
- Greater coverage
- Controlled delivery
- Increased safety for service users

Referrals to the service increase yearly due to the ageing population within the city. Many of these clients live in designated regeneration areas within the city. During the last financial year 25% of our clients lived in regeneration areas.

**This figure does not include identified 'at risk' areas within the city*

1.8 Staff actively participates on many networks and committees to ensure that the voice of our client group is heard and continually lobby both local and national bodies for changes in service provision as well as identifying unmet needs within the city of Aberdeen. Care and Repair Staff attend/support local community groups to provide talks and information on the service and work closely with other local organisations in the city, in particular through the Cash in Your Pocket partnership where a bespoke referral system to other organisations is in place. The service manager chairs the Cash in your Pocket Network meeting, sits on the CIYP advisory group, and is a member of Older Persons Advisory Group and ASEN (the social enterprise network).

1.9 This year we participated in 12 community events/talks.

2.0 Services

Care and Repair provides the services listed below. The number of referrals relates to those received during the reporting period:

Service	No of Referrals
Advice	288
Trusted Traders	147
Affordable Warmth	89

Non- grant aided (Repair/improvements/adaptations)	213
Small Repair Service	3097
Minor Aids/Adaptations	46
Total	3800

3.0 Project Statistics

Aberdeen Care and Repair received a total number of 3800 referrals to the service over the year. Project Officers carried out 828 home visits.

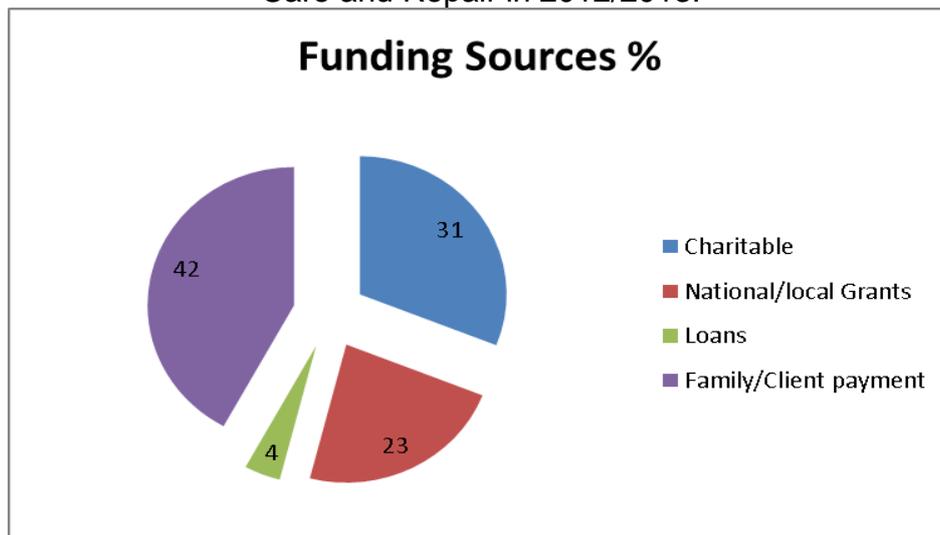
Total cost of work completed was as follows:

Small Repairs/Handyman	£ 121,114.14
Affordable Warmth	£ 129,141.24
Minor Aids/Adaptations	£ 13,142.87
All other work	£ 388,747.30
Total Costs of Works Carried out	£ 652,145.55

*Figures adjusted for year end

3.1 Funding Sources

The graph below illustrates the sources of funding which covered the works carried out through Care and Repair in 2012/2013.



£202,194 of charitable funding was raised for individuals in 2012/2013

Each year the % of charitable funding required enabling work increases with a total of 73% of funding coming from either the client or family contribution or charitable funding. This highlights the reduction in national and local grants available each year.

4.0 The Service

4.1 Free advice/Trusted Trader Scheme

One of the barriers for older and disabled people, carrying out work within the home is the lack of technical knowledge and the ability to find trusted tradesmen. The advice service has always been seen as an important part of the service, and over the last few years the numbers of advice cases have increased with vulnerable clients requiring immediate advice. The project has an officer on duty between 9am and 4.30pm in order that any calls for advice can be dealt with immediately and clients can get the information they require thus reducing their concerns. The service's staff attends regular meetings/training with partner organisation on local and national changes such as

Welfare Reform and all staff attended specific training on complaint handling, visual awareness and home fire safety.

A formalised 'trusted trader scheme' has been in operation for the last 3 years. This is a list of local reputable contractors used by Care and Repair and their clients. In order to be part of this scheme contractors have to submit copies of their public liability insurance, accreditations, and details of their hourly rates and sign up to Care and Repair's Code of Conduct... Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out to ensure that these contractors are providing a professional and reliable service. Contractors are removed from the lists if they do not meet Care and Repair standards of service. 31 contractors were registered in 2012/13. A registration fee is paid by the local contractors and this is paid into the services charitable fund (Aberdeen Care and Repair Group). The web site provides information on our service provision as well as details of our Trusted Trader Scheme. www.aberdeencareandrepair.co.uk.

During 2012/2013, 435 clients received immediate advice or information on our Trusted Traders to enable them to carry out the work.

4.2 Repairs and Improvements or adaptations to the home

The Care and Repair service assists homeowners and private rented sector tenants carry out improvements, repairs and adaptations in their own homes. Clients are visited in their own homes and given advice on the options available to bring the property up to standard. This includes drawing up specifications, obtaining quotes from selected contractors and helping organise the financing of the works required. There are no statutory grants available for repairs and improvements, which can result in many clients being unable to afford the cost of the work. In these cases charitable organisations have to be approached for financial assistance. This has an impact on the length of time taken per case, as well as a reduction in the level of repairs carried out by householders, many of whom choose to carry out the minimal repair required and in some cases none at all.

Types of work undertaken: roofs/gutters/downpipes/ rewiring/window & door replacement/shower installation etc.

During 2012/2013 – 213 cases were assisted through Care and Repair for this type of work. Total cost of work carried out being £388,747.30.

4.3 Affordable Warmth Project:

The Aberdeen Affordable Warmth Scheme was established in October 1999. It is targeted at householders in Aberdeen who are owner-occupiers, are on low fixed-incomes and have little or no capital assets except the house they live in. Since then the project has developed and with the recent rises in energy bills the target group has widened and now includes anyone suffering from fuel poverty.

The main barrier, which prevents people from this group carrying out energy efficiency measures, is their lack of capital, ability to borrow money or repay a loan on a low fixed income. The scheme works with individual householders to identify the energy efficiency measures required, access any grants available both locally and nationally and if necessary approaches charitable organisations on their behalf.

The service administers a loan fund to provide loans for energy efficiency measures. This fund offers low fixed interest loans to clients where no alternative source of funding is available. The service arranges to have the work carried out by reputable contractors and ensures that work has been carried out to client's satisfaction.

One Care and Repair Officer is a fully qualified NHER Assessor and 2 have qualifications in energy advice.

Within the project there are 2 streams of funding held within the project which can be accessed by staff for clients these are:

- Affordable Warmth Loan Fund – householders are offered a loan to carry out energy efficiency measures. Current interest charges are fixed at 2.4% for loans over 12 months, loans up to 12 months are interest free.
- Energy Efficiency Grant – Small grants up to £500 are available for clients on low incomes, depending on each individual's circumstances. (This fund is held within the charity)

Fuel poverty is on the increase, the Scottish House Condition Survey 2009-11 report, indicates that 28% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty. In Aberdeen City this figure is estimated at 23%. However, with the fuel price increases since 2011 it is expected the actual number of householders that are currently fuel poor will be significantly higher.

During 2012/2013, 89 households received assistance through Care and Repair with work relating to heating. Total cost of work carried out being £129,141.24.

4.4 Disabled Adaptations

Aberdeen City Council stopped funding a post to support disabled adaptations for 2010/11. As a result our Managing Agent, Castlehill Housing Association decided to retain this service and Castlehill Adaptation Service was introduced on 1st April 2011. This service is a Technical Support service working closely with the Occupational Therapists, contractors, private sector housing department and clients to ensure work is carried out with the minimum distress to the disabled person. This can sometimes involve arranging temporary accommodation for the occupants whilst work is carried out. The service is self-financing and shares an office with Care and Repair staff.

4.5 Minor Aids/Adaptations

This project is proving to be very successful with referrals coming direct from clients and carers as well as from both health and social work sectors. We have now established a direct referral system with the community occupational therapists for low priority cases which ensures that households which will no longer get an occupational therapy assessment are referred direct to our service for early intervention. The level of assistance required is different for every individual and by operating this project through the care and repair service we are able to tailor the assistance provided to the individual need of the householder. All staff, both officers and tradesmen undertook training through ROSPA on falls prevention and can carry out safety checks whilst at properties for any reason.

It should be noted that although funding was secured to extend the availability of the small repairs service to older and disabled people this has had a knock on effect on other services within the Care and Repair Project, in particular the requirement of assistance from our Funding Assistant and/or our Technical Officer. This year we received funding through Change Fund to cover some of these costs.

Identified below are the numbers of cases which have required **an Officer or a Funding Assistant's** support in relation to installing minor aids/carrying out minor adaptations within the home. These cases are for larger works which may require technical support or financial assistance.

	Outcomes to date
No of Cases Completed for Minor Aids	40
Total cost of minor aids carried out to	£13,142.87

Minor Aids/Adaptations

- New service introduced as a result of Change Fund Funding available to all older /disabled people within Aberdeen City
 - 451 Householders received assistance regarding minor aids
 - £5,000 grant to cover the cost of equipment was secured from Premier Oil
 - 411 of which were carried out by our Small Repairs Service
 - 94 key safes were fitted
 - 98 grab rails
 - 58 minor electrical works (additional sockets/raising sockets etc.)
 - 63 external rails
 - 28 adjustment to external steps
 - 70 various minor works in relation to home safety

The total number of households receiving assistance with the support of the 'change fund' to date is 451.

4.6 Small Repairs Service/Handyperson Service

An increased demand for the small repairs and handyperson service over the past few years resulted in the project carrying out a review of service provision, which included a customer survey to obtain our service users views. The outcome of the review resulted in additional Tradesmen being employed to deliver the service in-house and the project had to generate enough income through its charging policy to meet shortfalls in statutory funding.

During 2011/12 our charging policy was reviewed in order to ensure that those householders who are in most need accessed the service at the reduced rate. Charges were set at £15.00 per hr plus vat for those in receipt of benefits and £25.00 per hr plus vat for all other service users. These charges were retained in 2012/13.

The number of referrals to this service constantly increases and this service has proved to be beneficial to our clients for the following reasons:

1. Project can cover joinery, plumbing and electrical work as well as small tasks both indoor and outdoor, including safety and security measures.
2. Safety/Security – all Care and Repair Staff have full disclosure Scotland.
3. Continuity – same person/service turning up to do the work.
4. Cost effectiveness – clients are advised of charges before work carried out and assistance can be provided by other parts of the service if financing the work is an issue.
5. Appointments are arranged to suit clients whilst they are on the telephone, and backed up by an appointment letter where necessary.
6. Staff can be flexible, i.e. meet social workers/carers at appointed times.
7. Staff have the knowledge of other assistance that may be available through Care and Repair and other agencies/services, where clients can be referred for assistance.
8. Small jobs are often more complex or involve more than one type of tradesman.

“Your tradesman was a most efficient workman; he was neat and tidy and left the area he was working in spotless – being careful to clear up any wood shavings. Pleasant manner and really helpful, I would not hesitate to use your service again” (March 2013)

“Grateful for your prompt help and assistance – couldn’t do without you” (Jan 2013)

4.7 Homecheck Service

This service is available to all residents within the city of Aberdeen irrespective of age or tenure. Officers from the Homecheck service visit residents in their own homes to carry out a safety check and provide advice to clients on preventative measures that can be undertaken. If there is a need for safety equipment to be installed our safety officer/joiner can fit the equipment at the same time. The type of equipment fitted is as follows: Grab Rails, Safety Gates, Smoke Alarms. A service level agreement is held with Aberdeen City Council to provide a safety officer/joiner to carry out the installation of safety equipment in client’s properties within the city of Aberdeen. This arrangement will continue in 2013/14.

Total number of referrals to service 570

Total number of completions during reporting period 646

On average work is completed at the time of the safety check.

5.0 Initiatives (Supported by Change Fund and/or Charitable Group Fund)

5.1 Security Initiative & Gardening Initiative

- During 2012/13 we continued to deliver our security project with support from charities/local companies. This fund purchases security/safety equipment and can also cover the cost of our Tradesmen time whilst installing additional security measures in client’s homes. Aberdeen Care and Repair Group Fund purchase this equipment with funds raised from charities/local companies and our Tradesmen fitted these items at no cost to the client.
During 2012/13 – 59 households received assistance through this project.
- During Spring Summer 2012, we offered a grass cutting service to older and disabled households irrespective of tenure. Funds from charities’/local companies are used to offer a subsidised service.

During 2012/13 - 536 gardening jobs were carried out through this project

5.2 Minor Aids/Adaptation Initiative

- During 2011/12 this initiative was set up as a result of changes in the Occupational Therapists criteria. This change resulted in low priority cases no longer being assessed for minor aids/adaptations. The project received revenue funding in 12/13 through change fund, and a local company, **Premier Oil**, provided us with £10K of funding to supply these minor aids free of charge/or offer small grants towards the costs.

During 2012/13 – 411 households received assistance relating to minor aids

6.0 Qualitative Assessment:

6.1 Income maximisation:

As part of our holistic approach a benefit check is carried out to all clients who receive a home visit from one of the Project Officers or Funding Officer. If benefits are required clients are assisted with completing applications for the benefits highlighted below, but referrals are also made on to other organisations if it is a more complex cases. Another avenue for increasing household incomes, particularly with the elderly or disabled is to apply for Annuities from national/local or work related charitable organisations/trusts. This is seen by staff as another way to help those

who may sit just above minimum income levels and find it difficult to deal with the unexpected expenses of housing repairs or unexpected increase in daily living costs.

Over the last 12 months:

43 Clients have received assistance in applying for additional benefits.
 £1418 a week of additional income has been secured.
 £76,999 per annum of additional income secured for our client group.

Benefits Secured 12/13

Attendance Allowance	8	Pension Credit	1
Disability Living Allowance	4	Council Tax Benefit	1
Annuities	14	ESA	1

*NB a large proportion of this work is carried out by our Funding Assistant Post which is funded by Fairer Scotland Funding

7.2 Charitable Fundraising

During 2012/13 the project secured continued funding from Fairer Scotland to support a part time post working on income maximisation and charitable funding. This has enabled a member of staff to concentrate on income maximisation and applying for charitable funding for individuals within Aberdeen city for various repairs/improvements/adaptations as well as basic furniture irrespective of tenure. This area of work is labour intensive and time consuming and allows existing project staff to concentrate on their specialised area of work, whilst the Funding Officer deals with the financial side in most cases.

Cases Completed – where charitable funding was secured

Number of Households	% living in regeneration areas	% living in social housing	Total Number of charities approached	Charitable Funding Secured	Cost of Work enabled as a result of charitable funding
372	46%	25%	201	£202,194	£354,458

Type of works where charitable funding was required

Property repairs/property improvements	17%
Heating issues	15%
Internal – decoration/floor coverings/white goods/bed etc	29%*
Disabled Adaptations (Major)	20%
Minor Adaptation/fencing/driveway/kerb turning	19%

*The existing project would not have previously assisted these householders

We have received confirmation from Fairer Scotland Board that this post will continue to be funded in 2013/14.

7.3 Additional Assistance – Referrals to other agencies

As part of the holistic approach taken by Care and Repair staff during this financial year, 481 referrals were made to other agencies/organisations on behalf of Care and Repair clients for assistance.

8.0 Charitable Group Fund

The service has a registered charitable group fund (SCO 15306) whose principal activities and objectives are the promotion of the welfare of the elderly/and or disabled in respect of housing and other relative matters. Traditionally funds raised by the charitable group are used to provide 'hardship grants' to individuals to assist them carry out repairs, improvements, adaptations, including on some occasions assisting with the cost of basic furnishings such as beds, cookers and carpets. Staff put cases to the Management Committee who meet quarterly and decide whether or not a hardship grant is offered.

During 2012/13 55 Hardship Grants were awarded totalling £8838.18

Over the last year it has become increasingly difficult to raise funds for our charitable group for the general fund. As a result we have changed the way we do things and have targeted funders for particular projects. We now have 5 initiatives, these are:

Gardening/Security; Safety/Minor Aids; Energy Efficiency; Decoration; Electrical Safety

These funds are held separately within the charitable account and awards can be made at officer level. Information is provided below on each individual project. We have started to report back to the funders on the outcomes achieved because of their support and this has proved worthwhile with two organisations pledging support for another year.

Fund	Balance as at 31/03/13	Outcomes For 2012/13	Total Cost to Fund 2012/13	Total Cost of work enabled 2012/13
Energy Efficiency	£9,327.24	26 individual grants awarded	£4723.31	£42,038.00
Security/Gardening	£3702.11	408 Households (gardening) 59 households (security) & Equipment	£8311.88 (Total households assisted 467))	£11676.93
Safety/Minor Aids- Premier Oil	£334.06	46 individual grants awarded Totalling & Equipment	£5242.41 (Total households assisted 230 – average 2 rails per household	£29,128.49
Decoration -ASPC	1476.00	14 individual grants awarded	£1024.00	£5123.93
Electrical Safety	587.00	13 individual grants awarded	£1913	£2800

Without the support of these organisations/companies we would be unable to deliver these initiatives which were identified as gaps in service provision from our client group. The following organisations/trusts/charities supported the group fund in 2012/13 to deliver these projects:

John Gordon Charitable Trust
Thomas Primrose Trust

George Crombie Trust
Electrical Safety Council
Aberdeen Solicitors and Property Centre
Premier Oil
Apache North Sea
Maersk Oil
Marathon Oil

Further details on our group fund can be found on our web site www.aberdeencareandrepair.co.uk